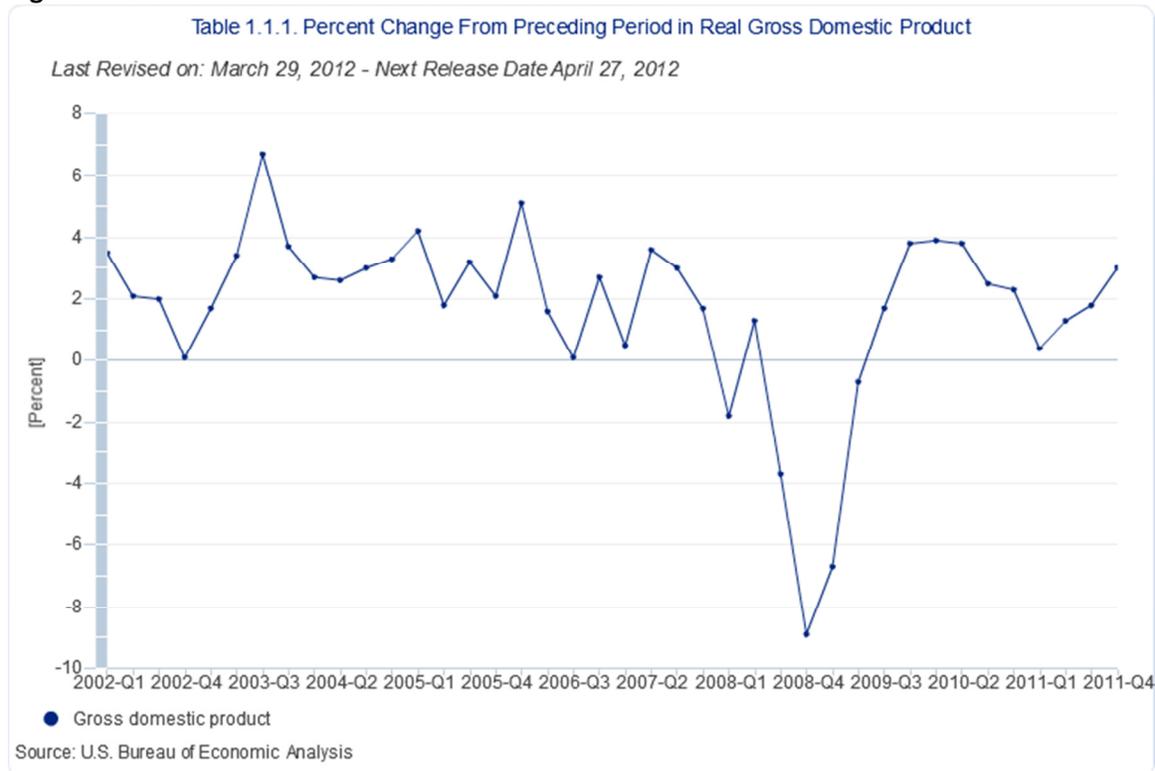


# Robeson County: Current Economic Picture

## The US Economy

On March 29, 2012, the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) announced revised<sup>1</sup> estimates of the growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP), a comprehensive measure of nation's output after correcting for inflation. According to the statement during the fourth quarter of 2011, real GDP grew at an annual rate of 3.0%.<sup>2</sup> Figure 1 plots these data for the past decade.

**Figure 1: Growth Rate of Real Gross Domestic Product**

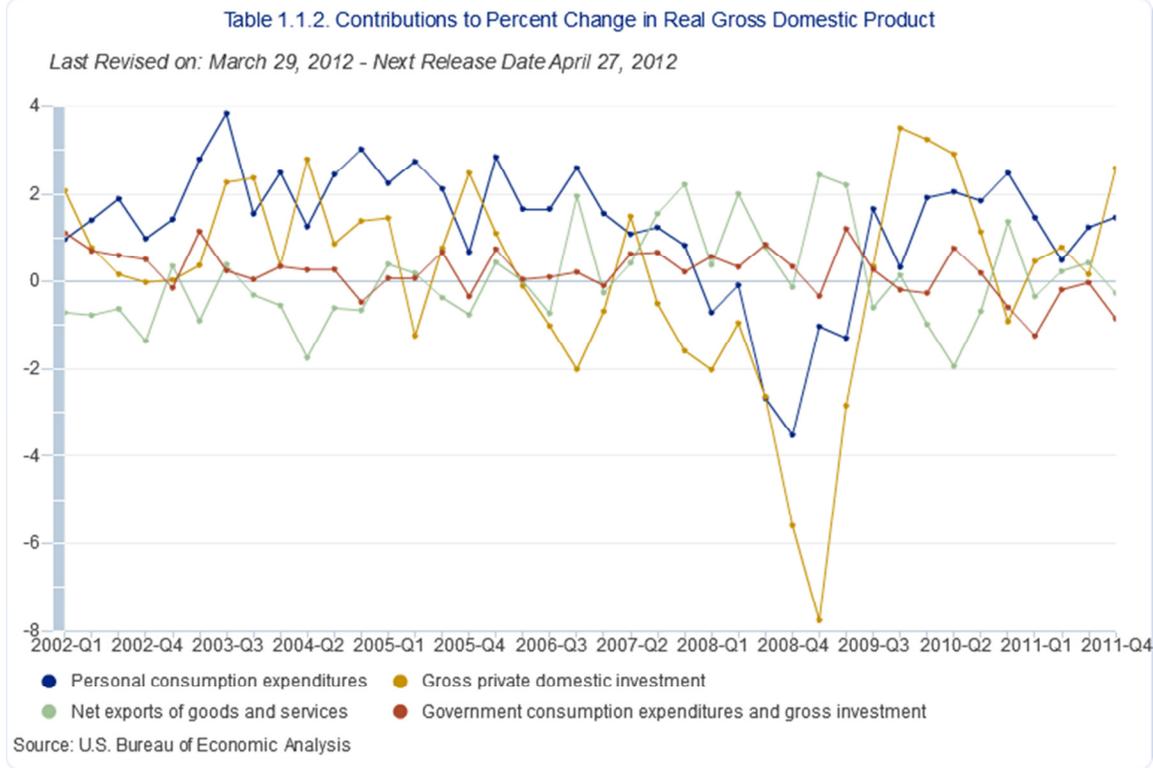


This 3.0% increase is composed of a 1.4% increase in personal consumption expenditure, a 2.59% increase in gross private domestic investment, a *decline* of 0.26% in net exports— exports minus imports, and a *decline* in government expenditure of 0.84%. Figure 2 plots these data.

<sup>1</sup> BEA revises its estimates as more data come in. See “Technical Notes” at the URL provided in fn.2.

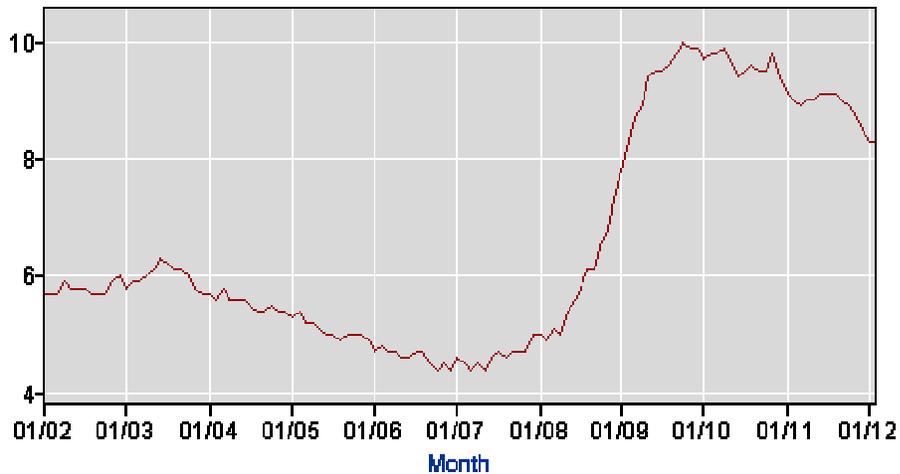
<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://bea.gov/newsreleases/national/gdp/gdpnewsrelease.htm>

**Figure 2: Percentage Change in Consumption, Investment, and Government Expenditure**



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, during February, 2012, national unemployment rate remained at 8.3%, same as January, 2012. Figure 3 plots these data.

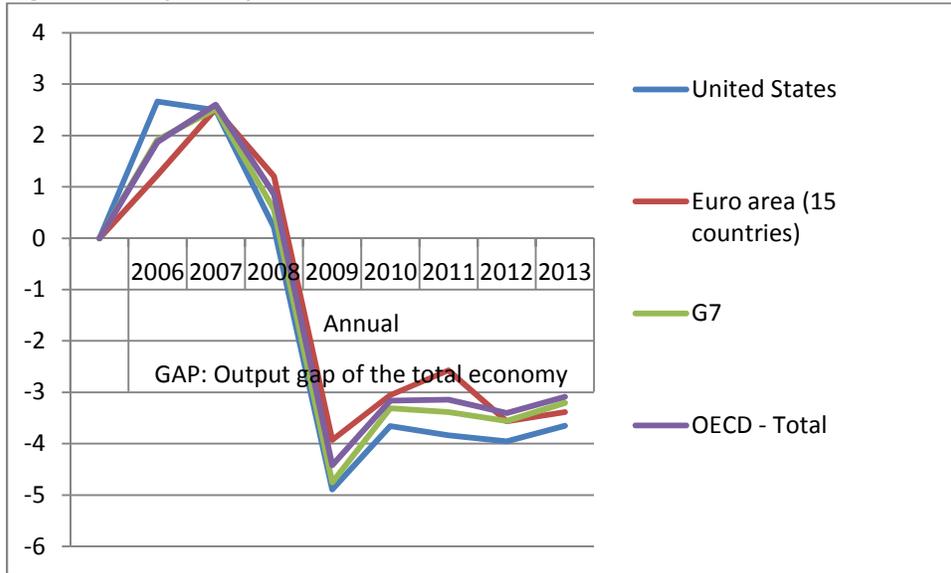
**Figure 3: National Unemployment Rate**



(Source: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov))

Often it is instructive to compare key variables across countries. Output gap is defined as the difference between the actual output level and the estimated potential output level, where potential output level is the output level which is expected to prevail in the long-run. A positive number indicates that actual output is greater than the potential output, and a negative number indicates the opposite. Figure 4 plots data for the United States, fifteen countries of the Euro area, the seven of the world’s most developed countries known as G7, and all the countries included in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The data start from 2006 and include projections till 2013. The data source is the OECD Website. The URL is [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org). According to the data, the US output gap is declining it is still the largest of the countries included.

**Figure 4: Output Gap<sup>3</sup>**

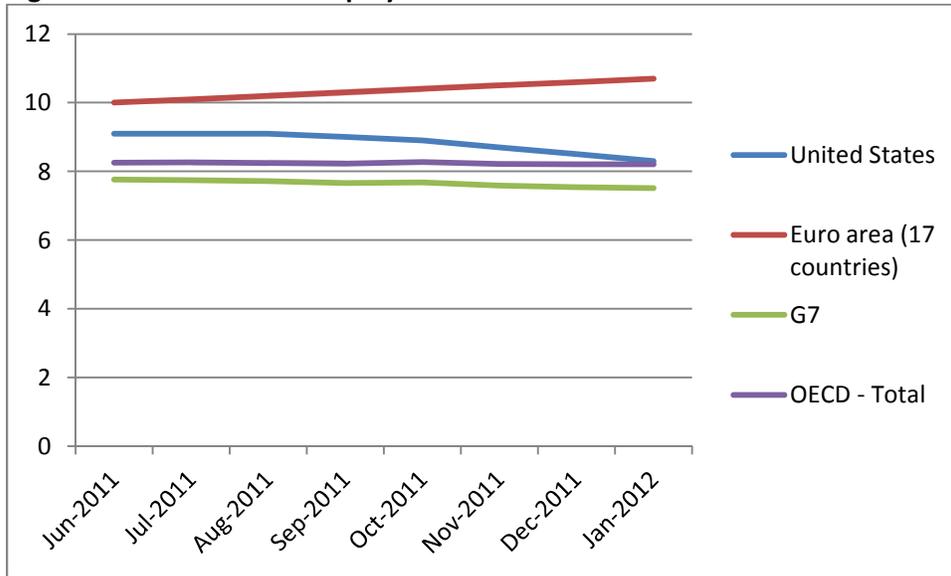


(Source: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org))

Figure 5 plots data for harmonized unemployment rate data for similar set of countries, except now we have seventeen countries of the Euro area included.

<sup>3</sup> “Indicators have been prepared by national statistical agencies primarily to meet the requirements of users within their own country. In most instances, the indicators are compiled in accordance with international statistical guidelines and recommendations. However, national practices may depart from these guidelines, and these departures may impact on comparability between countries. There is an on-going process of review and revision of the contents of the database in order to maximise the relevance of the database for short-term economic analysis.” [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

**Figure 5: Harmonized Unemployment Rates<sup>4</sup>**

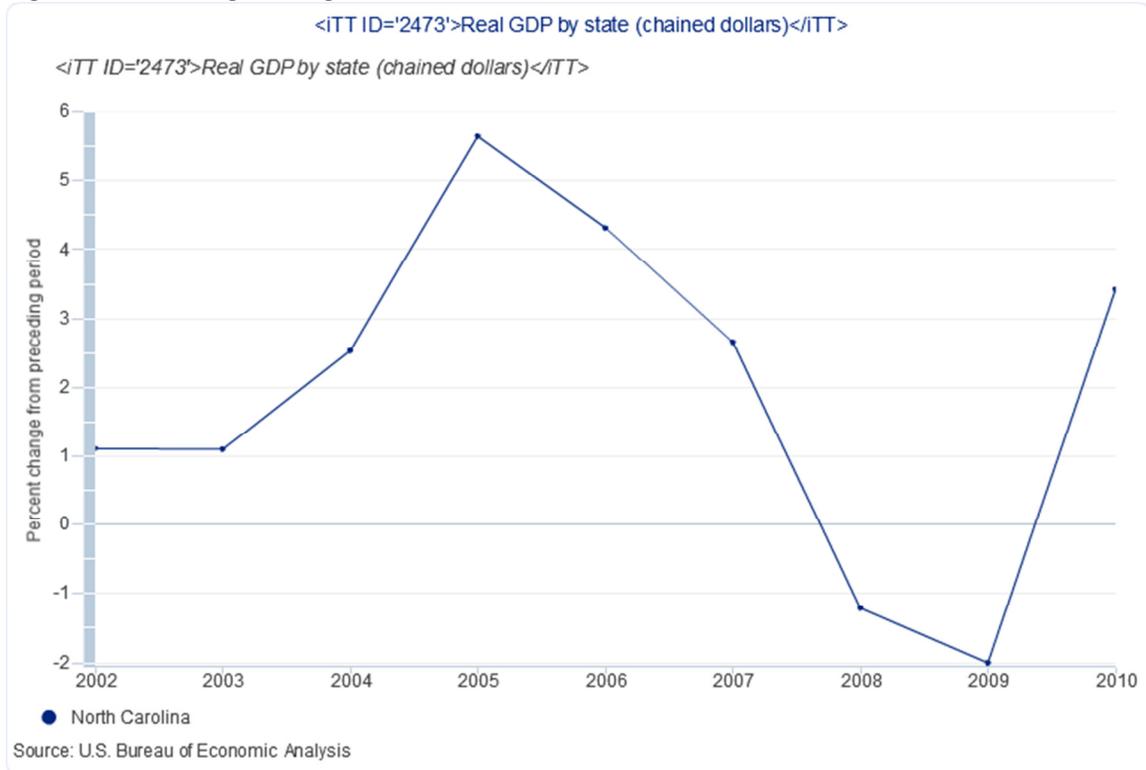


(Source: www.oecd.org)

## North Carolina

We find a positive economic trend in North Carolina as well. Figure 6 plots percentage change in real GDP.

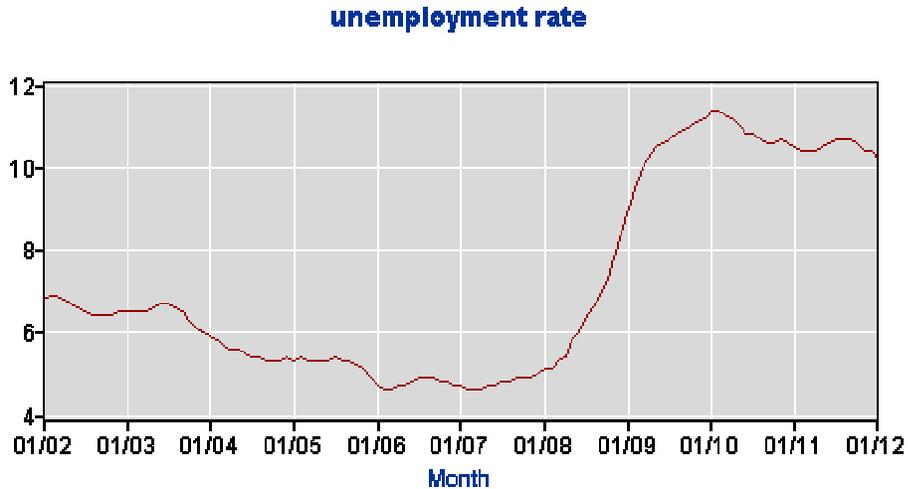
**Figure 6: Percentage Change in Real GDP for North Carolina**



<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

North Carolina unemployment rate, while declining overtime, remains higher than the US average. During January 2012, the latest data available at the time of writing this document, unemployment rate in North Carolina was 10.2%. Figure 7 plots these data since 2002.

**Figure 7: North Carolina Unemployment Rate**

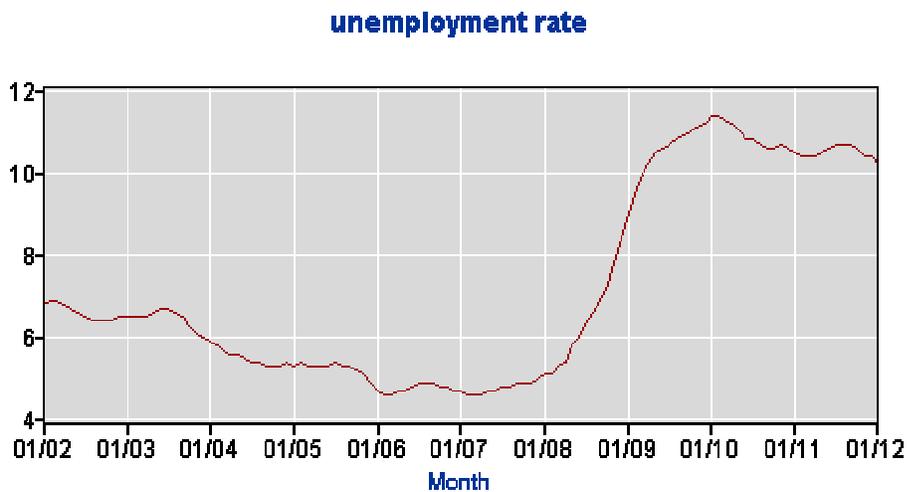


(Source: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov))

### Robeson County

According to the latest data available at the time of writing this document, unemployment rate for Robeson County during January 2012 was 14.0%. It jumped from 12.7% in December 2011. Figure 8 plots these data.

**Figure 8: Robeson County Unemployment Rate**



(Source: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov))

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